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The role of ict in efl classroom

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ABSTRACT

We cannot imagine our daily routine without the use of technologies, smart devices which have been around us in all spheres of our life for many years. With the development of the ICT, a vast number of educational platforms and software that can be used in education have been created. Using technology in language learning has become the perfect tool in reaching proficiency and fluency, and English lessons accompanied by technological support are the most effective and attractive for students who want to be successful in their language learning. In this article, I will discuss the methods of using ICT with the help of some educational platforms and software programs which can be used effectively in language teaching and learning.

Key words. Computers, ICT, educational platform, software program, language teaching, language learning, Interactive white board.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, we live in a world where technology is on our fingertips and using these technologies, smart devices in teaching and learning English as the same time. As Jeremy Harmer (2007) wrote "a word innovation means something new, which means new ideas to change things for better", the ICT has already become closer to the generations of students nowadays and all the teaching methods should be made according to their interest in order to be successful in teaching the language. But, we should be aware of the fact that all methods are not 100% successful, as Harmer claims in his book "if we look at all the language teaching methods which are used all over the world by different teachers at different levels, we cannot say that all of them are 100% successful. Therefore, it is very important to keep looking and searching to find ways to make teaching and learning better."

English teachers of today should be ready to provide their students with the opportunity to learn using technology and to show them that computers and smart phones are not created only for playing games and spending times on social media. Due to the implementation of the ICT in education, UNESCO, Microsoft and Intel have created the" UNESCO ICT COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHERS" in 2015, which gives clear directions to teachers on how to become more effective facilitators in the ICT-based lessons and how to create blogs and use online platforms where all students can share their projects and as well, exchange information and post notes with their group mates.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

ICT has brought a lot of changes in the field of education and as we can see, the innovations in teaching and learning process have enhanced and EFL teachers and learners use of different technological tools to make the educational process successful. The teachers who use ICT in their classroom need to effectively incorporate the technology and smart devices. The new trend in teaching and learning English today is using the so-called Ed-tech tools; first let us see the new methods or formal education programs that are used in today's modern classrooms.

One of the forms of these educational programs is blended learning, also called flip teaching or flipped classroom. This is a form where students learn new content online by watching video lectures sitting at home, and do tasks what taught in class. This form of blended learning or this new model teaching has been introduced by two teachers from Woodland Park High School in Woodland Park , Colorado, Mr. Jonathan Bergman and Aaron Sams who started by recording PowerPoint presentations and posting them online for students who missed class. Later, they started spreading their method with other teachers all around the world and today teachers are using online videos and video podcasts to teach students outside the class. With this, teachers are having more time for collaborative work and helping their students to learn the material with examples and exercises. The flipped classroom method in English lessons along with technology turning our classrooms into environments where sharing, debating, creating and forming opinions is nurtured and teachers together with their students carry on

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collaboration instead of explaining something at the blackboard in boring atmosphere. Today, with this method, students are more active in all senses. They learn better with the use of interactive whiteboards, over-head projectors, eBooks, audio books, audio-visual aids, television, mobile applications, webinars and they are more involved in the classroom activities as well as in doing online exercises with the interactive multimedia content that helps in increasing their motivation.

Interactive White Board (IWB):

Gareth Davis says that "IWB brings everything together at one placemat one time with the use of authentic materials." IWB acts as a motivational tool. IWB has to be connected to the computer and data projector. IWB offers teachers to comprise video clips, films interviews , electronic microscopes, different websites etc . It improves the social skills of the students like cooperation and participation. In IWB lessons can be recorded and saved for further use. Bactra states that the power of images and capacity for collaboration is very significant in White Board's impact on learning. "IWB teaching is completely different from traditional methods of teaching. New vocabulary, word formation and sounds are practiced easily by IWB.

EBooks

An eBook is an electronic version of a traditional print book that can be read by using a personal or by using an eBook reader like iPods. EBooks also used to improve the teaching and learning skills in the classroom. In eBooks teachers and students can add images, info graphics, posters, video, and text, audio and so on. Learners can share eBooks with their friends. EBooks strengthen students' note making skills, the knowledge of English grammar and application skills.

Audio Books:

Baskin and Harris (1995:372) explain, "The first literature heard, not read." Audio books are not discovery of this century or even of the last one considering authentic books as equivalent to its content and not to its format (Baskin and Harris1995:372). Audio books are applicable for English language learners and young people who are craving for learning English with stories. Audio books are recordings on CD or digital file of a book which are read aloud." The use of audio books with struggling, reluctant or second language learners is powerful since they act as a scaffold that allows students to read above their actual reading level" (Beers 998:33, 2004).

Webinar:

Webinar is the best example for online learning. Webinar is an interactive seminar conducted by the World Wide Web. Usually a live presentation, lecture or work-shop that happens in real time as users participate through chatting, video-chatting, file-sharing or asking questions with a microphone. Webinars are more helpful in learning English.

Over head projectors/slides:

Over head projectors/slides and slide projectors are often used in language teaching and learning to supplement the black-board.

As being EFL teachers, we have the key role in the classroom and decide when and how we are going to use these ICT tools or methods. There is a wide array of free educational software applications and platforms that make English learning resources more accessible and they promote more personalized and meaningful learning for students, along with a healthy dose of classroom collaboration. For example: Google Drive, Edmodo, Kahoot and etc. These tools can be used to enhance and facilitate deeper and more authentic learning.

Edmodo

As a free social learning platform for students and teachers where presentations, books, materials, essays, songs and what resources are used during academic year can be saved here and teachers can create a class library to give students easy access to these at any time. Students find Edmodo as easy to work on it as it increases interest and motivation. Moreover, photos of group work projects of students or individuals, weekly spelling tests, multiple-choice quizzes can be posted so that all the students can see and do them for best practice. www.edmodo.com

Kahoot

Kahoot is a platform that is used to administer quizzes, discussions or surveys. It is a game-based classroom response system played by the whole group in real time as it is the perfect tool to engage students with a new topic. As a teacher, anyone can use Kahoot to create any educational games to encourage students towards competing in the classroom. www.kahoot.com

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3. CONCLUSION

A brief outline of the methods of using ICT with the help of some educational platforms and software programs which can be used effectively in language teaching and learning in this article enables the following conclusions: It is important to integrate ICT in language teaching and learning in the classroom as it increase for students good number of opportunities which includes: engagement in inquiry learning, an effective communication with peers, experts and their teachers, an opportunity to express their opinions and ideas on social learning websites.

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